

DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

March 13, 2020

Greetings in Jesus Christ.

I wish to offer two points of guidance regarding concerns about the spread of COVID-19. First, our love for each other calls us to engage in best practices to limit the spread of disease. Second, do not panic. Pray. I invite all of you to pray a rosary everyday for God's protection and for the healing of those who are sick.

The celebration of the Eucharist is the summit and source of our life. In keeping with the importance of the celebration of Mass and in exercising care for the well-being of one another, the following directives are in effect through Sunday, April 5, 2020 in the Diocese of Marquette .

- Anyone 60 years or older is encouraged to consider not attending Mass, since they are the most vulnerable to this virus. They would therefore be dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass.
- Persons who have underlying medical issues that put them at risk, or persons with compromised immune systems, are asked not to attend Mass. They, likewise, would be dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass.
- Persons who are not feeling well, no matter how mild the symptoms, are urged not to attend Mass. They also would be dispensed from the obligation.
- A general dispensation is offered to anyone else in the Diocese of Marquette who sincerely and seriously think they might be at risk. This dispensation may be used by anyone of any age.
- If you make use of these dispensations, it is recommended that you make a Spiritual Communion, watch Mass on television, listen to it on the radio, pray the rosary or meditate on Sacred Scripture.

The following directives are also made.

- We will suspend parish faith formation classes for the same time frame that K-12 schools are closed for in the State of Michigan.
- It is recommended that events with an expected attendance of over 250 people be canceled through April 5, 2020.
- In addition, priests, deacons, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should practice good hygiene. This includes washing their hands before Mass begins or even using an alcohol based antibacterial solution before and after distributing Holy Communion, with care to do this away from the altar to maintain a reverential celebration of the Eucharist.

Through April 5, 2020, the following directives are made, and may be continued longer at the discretion of the pastor.

- Distribution of Holy Communion should be only under the species of the Sacred Body.
- The congregational sign of peace should be suspended.
- Holy water should be removed from the fonts of the Church

Let us remember to put our trust in the Lord.

With prayers that your heart be filled with the *Joy of the Gospel*, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John F. Doerfler".

Most Reverend John F. Doerfler, STD, JCL  
Bishop of Marquette